



Reduce Stress - Take Control of Your Life

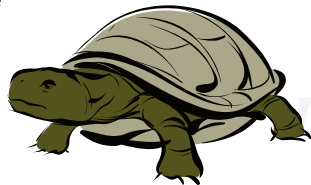


Factors of Stress

Stress is a normal part of life, and does not cause diabetes, although it can worsen the symptoms. Changes in our lives can be a major source of stress. Our body reacts to these changes with physical, emotional, spiritual and mental responses. Being out of balance in one of these areas, can cause serious problems for people with diabetes.

It's stressful:

- to learn you have diabetes
- being told you have complications of diabetes
- to monitor your health everyday
- not being able to afford the medical supplies for proper diabetes care
- to inject insulin everyday
- to lose someone



Symptoms of Stress Related to Diabetes

Some signs of stress are:

- blood sugar increases
- high blood pressure
- tiredness
- high pulse rate
- pupils dilate
- shallow breathing
- problems sleeping
- not able to relax



Prolonged stress can lead to:

- feeling tired ("burnout")
- depression
- over or under eating
- illness and accidents
- headaches
- smoking and drinking
- muscle tension
- heart attacks

Here's what you can do

Finding ways to relieve stress, will be your own worthwhile personal journey. A few ideas to reduce stress include:

- good blood sugar control
 - drumming and singing
 - eating healthy, balanced meals
 - smudging with sweetgrass, sage or cedar
- praying to the Creator or a higher power
- participating in healing circles
- meditation or yoga
- speak to an Elder
- walk
- dance at the pow wow
- joining a support group
- read
- learning to say no -set boundaries
- positive self-talk
- live one day at a time
- humour, laugh often

Laughter is one of the best medicines for relieving stress. It lowers your blood pressure, your heart rate becomes more regular, and stress decreases.

Managing Stress

Definition of Stress

Stress is how we react to a situation, emotionally, physically, mentally and/or spiritually.

Everyone will react differently to a situation. Depending on our attitude (positive or negative) will determine how the situation will affect us.

For example, responding to a high blood sugar reading, one may get upset and cause blood sugar levels to increase putting themselves out of balance, emotionally and mentally. While the other will take necessary steps to lower blood sugar levels, by going for a walk (which decreases stress and lowers blood sugar) and puts oneself back into a healthy balance.

Don't let stress build up and rule your life. Never underestimate the power to choose the way you think. You can choose to maintain a positive frame of mind. Start saying "I can do it", "I am open to new ways" and "I have control of my life", etc.



The Turtle

Today, many people rush through life, and miss out on enjoying life. It's important to learn a lesson from the turtle; to slow down, live in the moment and experience life in a good and healthy way.



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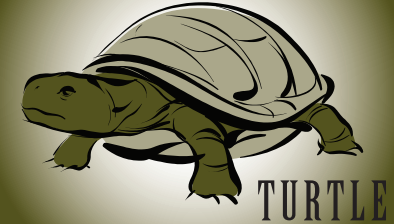
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The information in this pamphlet is for information only. The Southern Ontario Aboriginal Diabetes Initiative suggests contacting a health care professional.

STRESS & DIABETES IN THE ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY



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